

Socialist Worker

People's Assembly to unite the resistance

WHAT sort of a country are we living in? Fiachra Daly, a Priory Hall resident was driven to suicide after being harassed by his banks. Even his death did not stop their economic brutality.

A few days after he died, his partner got another letter from KBC bank demanding €17,000.

Fiachra was only one of over 100,000 people who have fallen into mortgage arrears.

Up to recently, there were regulations stopping the banks making more than three unsolicited calls a month.

There was also a year long moratorium on reposessions.

But the FG-Labour government has scrapped these regulations and given the banks a free hand to harass borrowers.

The political elite think that there are not enough evictions happening in Ireland.

They want to see more people thrown out of their houses so that the property market gets working again.

They sense a slight pick-up in property prices and, like vultures, they are now swooping. The result will be growing stress and panic.

Against this background, the government is again talking about another €3 billion in cuts and tax hikes.

Their lapdogs in the media are busying themselves with the cabinet debate between Labour about whether it should be €2.7 billion or Fine Gael's €3 billion.

Discussion on how to stop the cuts entirely is ruled out of the frame by the mainstream media.

But behind the haggling over figures, real suffering is being ignored.

Suffering

Children are going hungry in modern Ireland because of successive attacks on social welfare.

Hospitals have reached a state of virtual chaos because of policies which are pressurizing nurses to leave.

Under the radar – and far from the media glare – an ongoing war is being fought to drive people off disability payments or conscript the unemployed into jobs that pay just €50 more than their dole.

Joan Burton's aim is to drive more people onto the emigrant plane – so that the pressure is taken off her government.

The Irish people have had enough of all this. We are suffering 'austerity fatigue' – and want an end to it.

But to bring change, we have to move beyond a 'giving out' phase and take action.



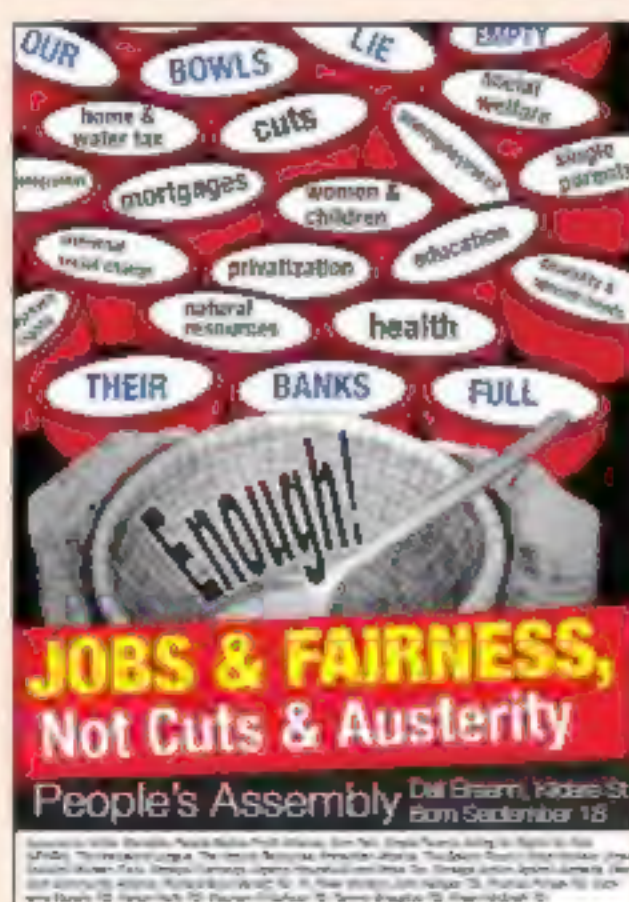
In their own words

"...I never once witnessed any signs. That is until the week prior to his death, when we received demands from banks, looking for payment of arrears on a property that we can't live in, asking us to fill out, yet again, forms to request an extension of our moratorium, all for a property we can't live in through no fault of our own."

Stephanie Meehan (partner of suicide victim Fiachra Daly)

People are really angry, but they are also frightened and so lots of folks just sit and watch the tele' resigned to thinking "what can we do". I think it is much better to try to make a difference. There are 700 known suicides a year at present not just from mental health issues, but from people in deep financial stress... I say to... Labour, they have desecrated Connolly's and Larkin's legacy

Rory Kiernan (brother of suicide victim Dominic Kiernan)



conscience of the elite would be affected and they would begin to listen.

The popularity of the Joe Duffy show is a tribute to this practice of 'give out and sit back'.

Action

But none of these methods will stop the suffering. We need to take action OURSELVES to bring change.

A start is being made with a People's Assembly being held outside the Dáil on Wednesday 18 September at 6pm.

This will bring together many different campaigns which are fighting cutbacks.

It aims to 'join the dots' so that the government does not pick off groups one by one.

It needs to be the first step to an escalating campaign of mobilisation.

There needs to be more and bigger marches going to the Dáil. There needs to be a shift to mass civil disobedience.

The people of Egypt or Spain began their wave of protests with mass assemblies in public spaces.

These were new and real forms of democracy that can agree on protests to really mobilise tens of thousands.

We need the same here. That is why the cry Enough is Enough – Time for Action should resonate from every corner of the country.

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Mental Health Special

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The Truth about the Seanad Debate

The nightmare of Priory Hall

John Lyons

"...I never once witnessed any signs. That is until the week prior to his death, when we received demands from banks, looking for payment of arrears on a property that we can't live in, asking us to fill out, yet again, forms to request an extension of our moratorium, all for a property we can't live in through no fault of our own."

STEPHANIE Meehan's heartbreaking open letter to Taoiseach Enda Kenny, written in the aftermath of the suicide of her partner of seventeen years and father to their two young children, Fiachra Daly (38) made national headlines recently and brought the issue of Priory Hall back into the minds of politicians and people alike.

Inactivity

For two years, the former residents of Priory Hall have been treated disgracefully by those in various positions of power.

The Fine Gael/Labour government has ignored their appeals for help. Meanwhile the courts, the Department of the Environment and Dublin City Council have all abdicated responsibility, whilst the banks with which the residents have mortgages have hounded them relentlessly for payment on properties that can no longer be lived in and called home.

For Fiachra Daly, the stress, anxiety and hopelessness of it all took its toll and he took his own life in July.

Stephanie Meehan sums up the devastation that has been caused to her family:

"Our future, security and certainty changed the minute we were evacuated and not one thing has changed in two years - every email, phone call, letter



seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

So I ask of you, what will it take now for someone to listen and act on something that should have been dealt with two years ago and saved a lot of taxpayers' money and most of all, saved a life?

Tiger Madness

Priory Hall tells the sorry tale of Celtic Tiger madness, where rampant, unregulated property speculation led to millions for a tiny elite of bankers and

property developers on the back of vastly overpriced and dangerously unsafe buildings such as the 189 apartments built in Donagheedy by former hunger striker Tom McFeely in 2007.

Eventually evacuated in 2011 when the true nature of building was realised by the authorities, the residents have been left high and dry by the political establishment and promises this week by the Taoiseach and the Minister for the Environment, Phil Hogan, that "something" will be

done are virtually meaningless.

Justice for the people of Priory Hall - debt forgiveness and the provision of new homes for all concerned - will not be granted by the politicians and bankers; it will need to be grabbed from them by mass popular people power.

The residents, their families, friends and supporters and all of us interested in seeing justice being done, need to launch a highly visible and vocal campaign in the days and weeks ahead.

Something doesn't smell right

By Laura Caffrey

THORNTON'S moved into premises on Killeen Road, Ballyfermot in 1995.

These premises are situated on the edge of a densely populated area.

The residents in the immediate area have always taken issue with this plant being so close and over the years have protested and complained about the odours they have had to endure.

Thornton's has grown in size since it first came to Ballyfermot and according to their website their client base now extends to over 50,000 residential and commercial customers.

Their website also states that all the biodegradable waste is taken to their plant in Nobber, Co. Meath.

What the website doesn't mention is, that before this waste, which includes the contents of all the black & brown bins is taken to Co. Meath, it is processed in the plant on Killeen Road,

Stench

The stench from Thornton's was particularly bad over the summer months especially at the end of July.

When People Before Profit Councillor and local resident Brid Smith complained to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) she was informed that they had only received a total of 8 complaints, 3 of which were hers. This prompted her to send out a leaflet urging locals to complain. The response to the leaflet told a different story with many of the residents saying they had indeed already spoken up.

A Facebook page set up by a local resident attracted 150 people in less than two hours with many of them furious at the conditions Thornton's are



forcing them to live under.

Residents were complaining that the smell was so bad that they couldn't open a window during the hot clammy weather, clothes that



were hung out to dry would have to be rewashed and many claimed that the smell was so bad their children couldn't play outside.

Through the Facebook page and word of mouth over 30 locals came together to start a campaign to try to get the processing of biodegradable waste out of Ballyfermot.

There is no other plant of this kind in such close proximity to a densely populated area and it shows that Thornton's hold the people of Ballyfermot and surrounding areas in absolute contempt.

A public meeting will be held in the Lower Cherry Orchard Community Centre on Monday 30

September at 8pm with invitations to attend sent to the E.P.A., Thornton's and all local TD's and Councillors.

The Life of O'Brien

Marie McGee



LAST week billionaire and media magnate Denis O'Brien won a court case challenging the Revenue's position that he owed the State €57 million in capital gains tax.

A query arose given the fact that a company controlled by him (Parteney Limited) bought a mansion in the exclusive Dublin suburb of Ballsbridge in 2001.

O'Brien's defence is that the property was "uninhabitable" a claim strongly denied by the previous owners.

Ms Justice Mary Laffoy found that O'Brien was not technically resident in Ireland for 2000 or 2001, but in the Algarve. This exempts him from paying tax on the €284.8 million received when Esat Digifone was sold to British Telecom in 2000.

Mr O'Brien was not in court and declined to comment on the decision. His sense of civic duty and concern for correct taxation procedures are astonishing at a time when the country is in such dire straits.

What's €57m?

FOR €57 million we could
 ■ Employ over 2 million staff nurses for a year.
 ■ Cover the "contribution charge" for 22,800 Third Level students
 ■ Rent almost 6,000 properties in Cork for an entire year.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Milne Foods Protest

MILNE Foods workers were forced to take to the streets in Birr, County Offaly on Saturday, 24 August, to protest at the refusal of the company to honour a Labour Court recommendation or even to meet with its employees' representatives.



Milne Foods is a fruit and vegetable processing plant in Syngeduff Industrial Estate.

This is the latest in a series of actions - including a series of strikes - in an attempt to make management aware of the seriousness of the situation.

SIPTU Organizer, Michael Browne, said: "It has become clear that the company has no intention of implementing the Labour Court recommendation which it received back in March.

The workers have been left with no option but to take industrial action and now organise this protest after they exhausted all other avenues open to them to initiate constructive dialogue with management.

He added: "This company is in receipt of State funds from contracts to supply publicly funded bodies including a number of Health Service Executive hospitals.

However, management is refusing to honour a Labour Court recommendation or even meet with workers' representatives."

According to Mr Browne some workers at Milne Foods organized themselves into a union a year ago and a number of issues including pay and overtime/shift premiums came to light.

The Labour Court issued a recommendation that Milne Foods engage with the union with a view to reaching a collective agreement on pay and conditions, and Mr Browne said strike action originates from the company's failure to comply.

Lockout at State Solicitors

PRIVATE security staff at the Chief State Solicitor's Office found themselves 'locked out' as the contract was transferred to a different company - TOP security - and their jobs were gone.

Substandard

SIPTU members staged a picket at the offices in Little Ship Street, in Dublin. Peadar Nolan of SIPTU described how normally workers in such a predicament would have their contracts carried over under the Transfer of Undertakings Guidelines (TUPE).

"The incoming contractor... has refused to step up to their obligations to what we regard as an industry norm." He pointed out that these workers are public sector and that "even under the Haddington Road agreement there are certain protocols that have to be observed."

Paddy Dowling, a worker with the company for the last 18 years, commented: "We had a lockout in 1913 and the same thing is happening now. We're going through a reverse of history."

"What we need to see is the three groups that are involved in this dispute come together to resolve it."

He went on to state that TOP has recognised these rules in the case of five workers on a building site in a previous transfer "so they cannot claim to ignore them in this case."

Blood on their Hands

Since the onset of the crisis spending on health care has been truly savaged. In the six austerity budgets to date, more than €2 billion has been cut from healthcare provision annually.

This has left over 300,000 people languishing on waiting lists and fearing for their futures.

Within the health sector, few areas have suffered as much as mental health.

According to one estimate

400,000 people now have some form of mental health problem.

This is an epidemic caused in large part by the alienation of modern society, the brutality of unemployment and the economic terrorism of the bankers and their government enforcers.

Everyday people are terrorized in their own houses for the crime of wanting a home and losing their jobs.

The crisis has massively increased the levels of anxiety in Irish society

What socialists say



and the Minister for Health, James Reilly, promised to do something about it.

Specifically, he promised some

€35 million to be ring-fenced in last year's budget for the recruitment of 477 mental health professionals.

To date not one of these posts have been filled.

With the Troika helping to set government policy it is increasingly obvious that the needs of the bankers will always take priority.

No end of money can be found to bail out the wealthiest speculators in the global economy. Meanwhile ordinary people are

left in great pain to suffer at the hands of a system that chews them up and spits them out.

Below we carry an interview with Rory Kiernan, who is a man that has shown great dignity in fighting for a brother who committed suicide.

If Dominic Kiernan had gotten the services that were his by right he may well be with us today.

Dominic is just one of the many victims of Irish austerity. Let's make sure he is one of the last.

Dominic Kiernan: Victim of Mental Health Services

Q—Rory, the story of your brother's death is really tragic. Perhaps you could start by briefly explaining Dominic's on-going battle with manic depression?

Ans Hi Brian, yeah, Dominic was diagnosed a manic depressive (p.c. name bipolar disorder) when he was only 12 years old.

He had been bullied at primary school, which I have since learned seems to be a common denominator with depression sufferers.

Dominic never went back to school after his breakdown at 12, despite this he was a very intelligent guy.

He sometimes went on a "high" but most of his life he was down, mental health services keep suffering on a "down", only treating the mania.

It is easier for them to cope that way.

Q—In the days leading up to his death, Dominic tried on two occasions to access mental health services in Tallaght Hospital, could you outline those events for our readers?

Ans - Yes that's right, Dominic wrote everything down, just take a look at the film "A Beautiful Mind" and you'll see how sometimes manic depressives are like that.

We found a note saying he had been in a black depression since mid-summer 2012, about the time he had been diagnosed for Parkinson's.

He was at rock bottom crying for help on the evening of the 17 June 2013, looking to gain admission to the psychiatric unit.

Unfortunately he was told there were no beds and discharged that night.

Five days later on the afternoon of 21 June five days later he made a serious attempt on his own life.

He called an ambulance on this occasion, - again he was discharged that night, if that wasn't a cry for help, I don't know what is? Less than 4 days later on the morning of 25 June, he was lying dead in his father's driveway in Springfield.

We still don't know how he died, as we will probably have to wait a year for an inquest, but this does



Dominic Kiernan

not alter the fact he was turned away twice in 5 days.

Q—Clearly the lack of resources has had the most tragic of consequences in your brother's case. What would you say to those people who prioritise the health of the banks over the mental health of vulnerable people?

Ans - I think they are playing a very dangerous strategy.

If we had American-type gun laws I think a lot of these people would be lying in a pool of blood by now.

Yes people are really angry, but most people are also afraid and so sit and watch the tele' resigned to thinking "what can we do".

I think it is much better to try to make a difference.

There are 700 known suicides a year at present not just from mental health issues directly, but also from people in deep financial stress.

I suppose really that affects your "mental health".

I say to Fine Gael that they have betrayed Michael Collins, that great man they hail as the "originator" of their party.

And to today's Labour, they have desecrated Connolly's and Larkin's legacy.

Before the election we heard Eamon Gilmore blowing on about "Frankfurt's way or Labour's way" well that went straight out the window as soon as they got elected under those false pretences.

I expected the way it had been for 90 years from Fine Gael but a lot of people were taken in by Labour's lies.

Ordinary people have been treated with contempt and it is now our time to take a stand.

Q—I know, you are anxious that your brother's death will not be in vain. Perhaps we could finish by outlining your on-going campaign for justice for Dominic.

Ans - Absolutely. At present myself and some supporters are protesting regularly at Tallaght Hospital and the mental health services locations in Tallaght.

I also have a Facebook campaign going "Dominic Kiernan RIP VICTIM of Tallaght Mental Health Services" to spread the word.

I will also lobby local politicians, but I've seen

Pat Rabbitte's response to a man who cornered him over the massive suicide rate, he just keep shoveling his dinner into himself.

He really doesn't care, he knows there are plenty of big F-offs waiting for him on doornsteps -he won't run again, just retire on a massive pension.

Alongside this I feel a national campaign that joins the dots is very important. Anyone who cares about others in any way should get in the People's Assembly, at 6pm on 18 Sept at Dáil Éireann.

We need to greet the government on their day back from their hols. If we do nothing the government's job of keeping the "great unwashed" down is made so much easier.

So people, get out there, you might enjoy it besides, I've meet some great genuine people on protests. I also want to say thanks again to People Before Profit for backing me up in my campaign.

You did so as soon as I told you about it—10 thanks again.

■ For more information on Dominic's case and for ways to get involved, contact Socialist Worker on 0876574100.

Special Cuts for Special Needs

By Crea Ryder
(special needs teacher)

MINISTER for Health, James Reilly is slashing funding, yet again, in the area of Special Needs.

St Michael's House is one of many such organisations, which are facing drastic cuts.

It is a services organization which provides a range of services to almost 1,700 children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

It was informed earlier this month that an additional €1 million was being cut from its budget for the second half of the year, backdated to 1 July.

HSE funding for St Michael's has been cut by a total of €12.3 million over the last five years.

And this is just one more

example of hitting the most needy hardest.

Hundreds of school leavers with an intellectual disability and/or autism who require further education, training, or a day service have only been offered a partial service.

As their peers prepare to start college, the HSE has so far failed to provide a service to these young people.

Coalition

Inclusion Ireland, Irish Autism Action, Down Syndrome Ireland, the National Parents and Siblings Alliance and the Special Needs Parents Association are calling on Minister Reilly to make an immediate statement on what service will be available for these young people.

Inclusion Ireland CEO,

Paddy Connolly, says "the situation in the West is particularly bad, and an explanation is required as to why the numbers waiting for a service in the Western region are almost 58% of the national average".

And this is to add insult to injury.

The children who benefit from these services are also suffering from cutbacks in education, to the extent that this year sees children who will not be able to attend school as a direct result of the cutbacks.

Many of these organisations have a very good history of fighting back on these issues, both lobbying but also uniting together to protest on the streets. These protests need to be continued.



No to the Senate – No to fake democracy – Demand REAL democracy now!

Kieran Allen

The Irish media will focus on one issue over the next month: should the Senate be abolished? Worthy experts will line up on both sides claiming a 'passionate concern' about democracy.

In reality, it is a fake debate – framed entirely in conventional bourgeois terms.

The Irish senate is an elitist institution. Graduates from universities like Trinity College get a vote – but those from Ballyfermot College do not. The majority, who did not attend third level education, are also excluded. The Taoiseach of the day gets to appoint his favourites as senators.

The institution has become a home for redundant or aspiring politicians. But why does Ireland have such a ridiculous institution?

Origins

The origins of the Irish senate lie in two conventional theories of politics.

One came from Baron Montesquieu, who was one of the few aristocratic supporters of the French revolution.

Montesquieu admired English politics because it granted limited democracy to a small property owning class, while preserving a role for the aristocracy.

He was terrified of 'the mob' and so argued for a 'separation of powers'.

The majority might vote through laws, he feared, to dispossess the wealthy of their property.

But if there was an 'independent judiciary' – drawn from the upper class – and a House of Lords style second chamber, they could be stopped.

The other inspiration for the Irish senate was Catholic social teaching as promul-



gated by Pope Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*. When de Valera drew up his constitution in 1937, he worked closely with Archbishop McQuaid and they decided to give a particularly Catholic slant to Montesquieu's theory.

The Irish senate was to be an institution that represented 'corporate groups' – which were supposed to unite employers and workers in different economic sectors and deny the reality of class conflict.

Quadragesimo Anno spelled out the philosophy of a corporate state: 'The various classes work together peacefully,

socialist organizations and their activities are repressed, and a special magistracy exercises a governing authority'.

The Senate was modelled on this philosophy with special panels of agriculture, industry, and administration.

This 'classless' institution was then supposed to limit the power of central government.

In reality, it turned out to be a pipe dream. Instead of the panels being drawn from experts from the corporate sectors, they were recruited from failed politicians. And far from restraining the central gov-

ernment, the Senate was largely silent and ineffective.

On only two occasions – the last being in 1964 – did it ever even delay a bill from the Dáil.

Crisis

The Senate is clearly an outmoded, irrelevant institution but how does abolishing it fit in with Fine Gael's concept of a 'political revolution'?

Before the last General Election, they issued a document, *New Politics*, to address what they claimed was a 'broken

political system that is at the heart of the economic collapse'.

The crisis, they suggested, was not due to the failures of capitalism but only weak 'governance'. Fine Gael's proposal to abolish the Senate is supposed to be about 'modernising Irish democracy' and carrying out Enda Kenny's much vaunted 'political revolution'.

The alternative to the Senate is supposed to be an extended Dáil Committee system, fewer TDs and longer hours.

But these are also pathetic solutions to the real problem of Irish democracy.

There is currently mass disillusionment with a system of representation based on lying and corruption.

Everyone knows TDs are elected on policies which they brazenly discard afterwards.

They are over-paid and part of a vast corrupt patronage network.

More crucially, democracy is limited to a few minutes in the average citizen's life when they vote in periodic elections.

For the rest of the time, wealthy interests are able to lobby and blackmail to get their way.

These fake democratic structures have been used to impose Troika policies on the Irish people – even though we voted to reject Fianna Fáil which instigated them.

The choice we are being offered in this referendum is between keeping an elitist institution and/or endorsing the fake democracy of Dáil Éireann.

Instead of confining ourselves to this sham debate, we should raise the question of real democracy.

This means asserting the right to re-call representatives; cutting their salaries to those of the average citizen; making them report to popular assemblies; and, above all, giving the population democratic control of the economic forces which dominate our lives.

End the homophobic policy on blood donation

There has been much interest both nationally and locally in the 'End IBTS Homophobia' campaign. Tomas Heneghan of People Before Profit in Galway, spoke to Socialist Worker about his reasons for beginning this campaign.

SW: Tomas, can you tell me about your experience donating blood?

TH: At the age of 18 I began donating blood. I had not 'come out' as gay at that point but I knew I would have to stop giving blood if I ever had sex with another man.

Over 3 years I donated 10 times, even on my 21st birthday. I recruited other donors too.

I was recently required to present myself for a meeting with the Irish Blood Transfusion Service.

The IBTS had received an anonymous query regarding me and immediately put a restriction on me donating.

After receiving a letter from a doctor at the organisation which they refused to clarify over the phone, I was forced to travel to Dublin.

The atmosphere during the 30 minute meeting was extremely intimidating and I felt I was being interrogated.

The doctor asked if I had ever had sex with a man. I answered no to the doctor's question, yet felt I was not free to answer any other way without bringing trouble upon myself.

I believe the intention was just to pry into my private



sexual life.

When I asked if the IBTS would sanction the individual who had made the anonymous query, the doctor said nothing would happen.

In fact the same person could continue to make allegations against me and each time I would be immediately restricted.

The organisation delved

into the most intimate details of my life, my sexuality.

By the end of the interview I felt humiliated, and as if it was an exercise in forcing me to stop donating blood.

After *The Irish Times* picked up the story, I received another letter from the IBTS, which was, in my

eyes, damage control.

I don't know if I can donate in the future because of the anxiety I will have to endure each time.

SW: This is absolutely outrageous. Even the idea that you should face an 'allegation' over your sexuality is disgraceful. Congratulations on founding the campaign, 'End IBTS homophobia.' What do you hope to achieve?

TH: My goal is to have the lifetime ban on men who have sex with other men lifted and scientifically grounded policies put in place to ensure a better and safer blood donation process.

I also want to ensure that no one else has to go through what I experienced.

The IBTS policy for blood donation should be changed to distinguish between sexually active gay men who are high risk of getting HIV and those who are low risk.

For high-risk the lifetime ban on blood donation could be replaced with a 12 month deferral from last sexual contact.

For low-risk the IBTS should abolish the ban

This is an M&S ballot!



Mary Smith

MARKS and Spencer workers showed they are a force to be reckoned with. The workers - 88% of those balloted - recently VOTED for strike action.

This, together with mass meetings organised by their union (Mandate), has been effective in limiting the damage done to jobs and redundancy payments.

In August the company closed four stores in the Republic with the loss of 180 jobs, and a further 144 jobs gone in Co Antrim.

This was done without discussion with the union and included compulsory redundancies.

For a company that likes to present itself as 'ethical', they showed little regard for their workforce.

M&S employ over 2500 nationally, and they do very nicely on the backs of their

workers.

Net profits after tax were £489.6 million pounds for 2012.

The current chairman is Robert Swannell – he recently left as CEO of HMV just before that company collapsed.

But the stance taken by M&S workers over the recent closures has improved the redundancy payments on offer and has strengthened the sense of solidarity among those remaining.

This will stand to them when the company comes after them again – as companies tend to do.

Threats to premium payments or any worsening of conditions should again see Mandate union rally the workers in a ballot for action.

Meantime, M&S workers, along with other retail workers should attend the protest at the Dáil on Sept 18th – spread the solidarity and share the lesson that militancy works!

Is the Global Economy recovering?

Brian O'Boyle

Over recent months there have been growing signs that the global economy is gaining momentum.

The latest figures from the US and the core of the Eurozone are surprisingly robust, with various Purchasing Managers Indices (PMI's) showing their biggest increases for over two years.

German, Italian and UK output statistics are also improving quarter on quarter.

Add to this a spike in US growth projections and you have what some commentators believe is the end of the crisis.

'Abenomics'

Even the Japanese economy is showing signs of revival.

Its new Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, has increased government spending, made money cheaper and initiated attacks on working people.

Lower taxes, cheaper money and lower wages are meant to reduce the costs of (real) investment and this should lead to an economic recovery.

How has it all worked out? The latest figures seem somewhat encouraging as industrial production and general manufacturing are on the rise.

Government deficits have also been accepted by financial markets, but it is important to keep the scale of improvement in perspective.

After 20 years of virtual stagnation, Japan currently has a debt to GDP ratio of 245%.

This is the highest rate in the developed world and even the mini-revival is not expected to push growth rates above 2% annually.

This is not enough to generate a sustainable recovery and a look around the rest of the system reveals a similar scenario.

For all the talk of an American recovery,



US GDP is still around 22% lower than it would have been if the crisis hadn't happened.

Speculation

More importantly, the unemployment rate is still twice what it was before the crash and after 16 quarters of doom and gloom, the US economy is still reliant on the Federal Reserve for monetary support.

Since the crisis began, Ben Bernanke has tried every trick in the Central Bankers play-book to revive the fortunes of US capitalism.

Over the last four years he has pumped trillions of dollars into financial securities in a bid to cut the cost of borrowing.

When this didn't work he promised to pump \$85 billion into securities every month until unemployment fell below 7%.

This 'forward guidance' was meant to

encourage productive investment.

Instead it has largely translated into another orgy of speculation.

In March, stock prices on the Dow Jones reached their highest ever finishing position as financial markets exploded with activity.

Stagnation

No matter how cheap the money has gotten, capitalists won't engage in (real) produc-

tion and the underlying reason is a lack of return on productive investment.

Ordinarily crises are periods in which unprofitable capital gets cleared out of the system.

This process subsequently lays the ground for a renewed spurt of economic activity, as competitors are driven out of business and their plant and machinery is sold off cheaply.

This time around the scale of the crisis has meant that large numbers of insolvent firms have had to be saved.

Currently there are literally hundreds of thousands of zombie companies which are acting as a drag on the global economy.

Without sufficient capital being destroyed the rate of profit cannot recover and neither can the levels of investment.

Try as they might, the central bankers cannot revive the rate of profit and their policy tools are becoming increasingly irrelevant.

Pumping money into an economy without investment is like pushing wildly on a swinging rope.

All of the momentum eventually gets dissipated as the resulting money is funnelled into speculation.

All of this leaves global policy makers with an unenviable conundrum.

If they keep pumping in cheap money they risk another round of truly devastating financial bubbles.

If they cut it off too soon, they risk choking off any recovery that might have started.

Economic experts love to talk up the global revival and there have been many false dawns in the pages of the financial papers.

Either way two things are certain.

The first is that the economy is still a long way from making a proper recovery.

The second is that even if the system does begin to recover, it won't signal any end to the crippling austerity for ordinary people.

Priced out of education



James Grunell

THIS academic year will see Ireland's undergraduates faced with a "contribution charge" of €2,500, which the government plans to raise to €3,000 by 2015-2016.

To compound this difficulty, the income threshold for grant eligibility has been lowered by 3%, in a move that has resulted in some 800 students losing their grant.

This rise in what are essentially fees by another name coupled with cuts to the grant will invariably cause huge financial hardship for families who wish to send their children to college.

Research

New research commissioned by the Irish League of Credit Unions has shown that the cost of college is set to pass €1,000 per month.

The study goes on to show that one in twelve students will drop out of college this year due to financial stress, while 66% of students are working an average of eighteen and a half hours per week to pay their way through college.

Over 70% of parents informed researchers that their family budgets would be adversely affected by the increase in the student contribution charge.

This strain on the family budget will no doubt be a cause of increased pressure on students from poorer socio-economic

backgrounds who will inevitably feel that their education is putting undue pressure on their families.

The survey by the Irish League of Credit Unions showed that 42% of parents used their savings to fund their children's education, while 25% borrowed from their local Credit Union.

Those using their savings to fund their children's third level education have been saving for an average of eight years.

Debt

The growing dependency on loans to fund college is forcing students into an ever greater spiral of debt. Those relying on the grant have been affected by delays in the SUSI system with 32% of families

revealing that they have had to sacrifice spending on essential household bills due to grant delays.

The culmination of these factors is hitting working class families hardest.

The children of these families are literally being priced out of education.

They are essentially being trapped by the financial circumstances of their parents, with many becoming increasingly unable to break the poverty trap.

Strong investment in education is essential if a society wishes to develop and flourish.

Unfortunately this is something that our government seems determined to either oppose or deny.

Junior doctors set to strike



Maevie McGrath

NON-CONSULTANT hospital doctors (NCHDs) have voted to take industrial action over long working hours, which they say are unsafe for patients and for staff.

In the ballot, half of the IMO's 2,000 junior doctors voted and 97% of them have backed industrial action. Three weeks' notice was then served on the Health Service Executive.

The strike action will take place on Monday 23 September, and will not affect emergency services. It is planned to continue on a weekly basis, in at least one hospital in each region.

A representative from the IMO stated that it will force the HSE to deal with the issue of "dangerously long working hours once and for all".

According to an EU working time directive, NCHDs should not be working more than an average of 48 hours a week.

However, the IMO said some

junior doctors are working up to as many as 100 hours a week. Some shifts can go on for 24 hours.

The Chairman of the NCHD Committee, Dr John Donnellan, called on the HSE to produce a plan to resolve the issue.

"This has been an extremely difficult decision for doctors to make and we would not be in this position were it not for the inaction and prevarication of the Department of Health and the HSE.

"Even now, the Minister for Health could resolve this problem by directing his colleagues to tackle this issue once-and-for-all" he said in a statement.

Ultimately it is the savage cuts throughout the HSE that is causing junior doctors to go on strike. With consultant grades refusing to work longer hours, junior doctors increasingly have had to take up the slack.

This has not only put the doctors' health at risk, it is also undermining their ability to practice.

US intervention will weaken Syria's revolution

By Bassem Chit, Lebanese socialist

SINCE news broke of a possible US strike on Syria the overwhelming mood in the region has been an escalation of fear.

Thousands of Syrians fled towards the Lebanese border, while in Lebanon people were preparing for the worst.

The vision of a US strike on Syria as a liberatory moment probably only occurred to a tiny minority of people. It could only appeal to people who can easily escape the repercussions or who are so desperate that they welcome any change.

Implications

First, an attack will be disastrous for the people of Syria. It undermines the development of the revolution which offers real hope.

There is no such thing as a "surgical strike". The US administration's claim that it will punish the regime without also hurting millions of people in Syria and across the region is a fiction.

In reality a US strike is most likely to strengthen Assad. Alternatively, if the West is determined to bring him down, it will have to destroy most of Syria.

In the first scenario, Assad would be able to continue his murderous actions against the Syrian population while posing as an anti-imperialist hero. This would further isolate the Syrian Revolution. Already some people who supported the revolution are turning back to the regime under the pretext that it must be defended from the US.

We have seen what it means when the US decides to "depose a dictator" in Iraq, in Afghanistan and in Libya.

Aftermath

Even if the Americans succeed, they will also have destroyed all the structures and the networks built by the Syrian revolutionaries during their struggle against the regime.

All the experience of self-organisation, all the democratic processes put in place by the active masses, all the political developments within them—all of these will be destroyed.

That will leave an empty space for op-



portunistic forces, the proxies of Al Qaida and the regressive regimes such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, to take on the leading role.

In both scenarios, the US attack will first and foremost damage the Syrian Revolution.

Moreover it will be a pretext for the regime's allies in the region to rescue it by widening the circle of war.

Lebanon's leaders could submerge it in yet another war to escape the rising popular resentment against Hezbollah by sending fighters to bolster Assad in Syria.

It would silence local support for the Syrian Revolution under the slogan of "national discipline" against imperialism. Already the violence is spreading. Just last week Lebanon witnessed car bombs in densely populated neighbourhoods of both Beirut and Tripoli.

Regime

The idea that revolutions are won by some swift action that disposes of a regime and builds another, is a fiction.

Regimes are not simply structures balanced somewhere in some capital, that can be simply gotten rid of or taken over.

They are a complex web of relations of interests among those on the top of society. They continuously adapt their roles and the agencies of economy, thought and politics to benefit changing situations. And they have the money and the knowledge to do so.

That is why revolutions are not about simply deposing a dictator, military council or a corrupt president; however integral and necessary those actions may be.

They are also about sparking a process of mass transformation and of self-education and confidence within the masses.

Struggle

This develops through their continuous movement and struggle for change.

It emerges from the factory of ideas set up by the revolutionary process, as alternative structures and agencies of resistance and of self-organisation are erected.

In time this process forges the dual power that can truly defy the existing order. That is when the system can be brought down to open the space for a true mass transformation of society towards a better future.

Conflict

These processes must take place, even with dangerous setbacks.

As has happened in Egypt such setbacks can be an important space to polarise people to a revolutionary position.

They can filter out those elements that are willing to compromise with the ruling order at the first opportunity.

Moreover, observers often exaggerate the depths of these setbacks. The roots of the revolutions we are seeing are not simply a result of political conflict.

At their core are contradictions between the immense socio-economic developments happening at the base of Arab society and the existing superstructure and the political order.

These contradictions are far from disappearing. In Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, revolutionaries remind people of these antagonisms and the necessity to push the revolutionary process forward.

They argue for the importance of giving time for these agencies and structures of resistance to develop and to support them.

They can never, never fall to despair and call for foreign intervention or to side with one side of the ruling class against the other.

Building

The first and foremost task is to support the masses as they develop their own potential to achieve change through their own collective action.

This can never be achieved by substituting for their movement with surgical actions, whether a coup or a swift strike.

Notes from the Syrian uprising

By Ghayath Naisee, Member of the Revolutionary Left Current

THIS is a popular revolution—at its heart are the workers, the masses and the rural poor. It began in the popular working class districts and spread to the countryside.

This revolution from below is still alive in the popular quarters of cities such as Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Deraa and Deir Ezzour.

We created popular committees to coordinate our protests, and popular councils to rule our liberated areas. We have experimented in self organisation and self rule.

But we face many enemies. On the one side we have a cruel and barbaric dictatorship, backed by Russia, China, Iran and Hezbollah.

On the other is the counter revolutionary camp of Saudi Arabia and the petro monarchies backed by the US and western powers.

This is why we say 'neither Washington nor Moscow, Riyadh nor Tehran'. We want a future Syria under popular rule, where the labouring masses are in control.

Our victory can only come from our hands. The Western powers want to derail our revolution, they have their own imperial and sectarian agendas.

There are never any guarantees of victory. We always face the horror of defeat.

But socialists must always stand with the oppressed and those in revolt.

Protest against Russian homophobes

By Madeleine Johansson

ABOUT 100 people gathered outside the Dail on 3 September as part of an international campaign against homophobia in Russia.

These sickening new laws were unanimously passed by the Russian parliament this summer and ratified by Putin.

One bans the distribution of "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" to minors imposing fines of up to €10,500.

A second makes the adoption of Russian children by LGBT couples from other countries illegal.

A third allows the authorities to arrest foreign nationals who they suspect are LGBT or "pro-gay" and detain them for up to 14 days before deportation.

In all of this, the government claims it is promoting "traditional" Russian values over Western liberalism.

Attacks

The laws have given a licence to Neo-Nazi groups to physically attack and assault LGBT people.

One woman attending the rally in Dublin said: "I'm here today because I'm gay and have suffered from hate crimes. I hope that we can make a difference."

Also, being a victim of abuse can leave you disempowered and you can lose your ownership of identity and coming to a



protest helps you feel empowered again."

Protest

The protest was calling for Eamon Gilmore to intervene and make a statement against Putin.

Jed Dowling from the 'Action for Russia' campaign said: "We're calling on the Irish Government to put pressure on

Russia.

"We feel that we can be more powerful than the US in this case because of Russia's desire to be part of Europe."

"We also want to show solidarity with all the people of Russia who suffer human rights abuses."

The international campaign will be stepping up its actions in the run up to

next year's Winter Olympics taking place in Russia.

Max Kryzadowski, one of the organisers, said: "Pressure needs to be put on Coca-Cola, McDonalds and other sponsors of the Olympics to take this issue seriously."

Further protests are planned, including ones at the Russian Embassy in Dublin.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Car workers Strike in SA

AROUND 30,000 South African car workers have been on indefinite strike since 19 August.

The workers in the NUMSA union are demanding a 14 percent pay increase.

The strike has hit production at Ford, General Motors, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota and Volkswagen plants.

Nigerian health workers strike

HEALTH workers in Nigeria began an indefinite strike at the end of August.

Workers in the Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU), a coalition of health sector unions, are out against attacks on their working conditions and wages.

Baba Aye of the Socialist Workers League in Nigeria reports, "There is great enthusiasm to fight until we have victory. We might thus be in for a long drawn out strike."

Farmers fight in Colombia

TENS of thousands of Colombian farmers and agricultural workers began an all-out strike the last week in August demanding subsidies and help with rising fuel prices.

Farmers have blocked major roads causing massive disruption, leading to food and fuel shortages in some towns.

The strikers accuse police of using live ammunition against protests and tear-gassing people's homes.

Peace talks with the Farc rebel group almost fell apart last week, as government negotiators refused to discuss constitutional reform.

One of Egypt's leading revolutionaries arrested by Army



HAITHAM Mohamedain, one of Egypt's leading labour lawyers and an activist with the Revolutionary Socialists, has been arrested on his way to meet clients.

He was detained by the Army near Suez and has been transferred to a police station in the city. According to the latest information from Egypt, he has been charged with assaulting an army officer.

Haitham has played a leading role for years in defending workers in struggle, both in the police station and in the streets as a revolutionary activist.

He was at the forefront of the massive protests against Mohamed Morsi on 30 June, but has also been one of the few voices condemning the military's crackdown and the killing of hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood supporters since the Army takeover.

To see what you can do go to <http://menasolidaritynetwork.com/2013/09/05/egypt-labour-lawyer-haitham-mohamedain-arrested-by-army/>

What you can do from there:

- Sign the statement calling for Haitham's release and the dropping of all charges. Add your name.
- Write urgently to the Egyptian authorities calling for his release and an end to the harassment and prosecution of the military's political opponents.
- Rush messages of protest to

General Abd-al-Fattah al-Sisi, Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces.

■ Email General al-Sisi here mod@afmc.gov.eg

■ copy in Kamal Abu Aita, Minister of Labour (mino@ecg.mome.gov.eg) and the Egyptian Ambassador to Ireland Mr Sherif Elkhodh info@embegyptireland.ie

■ You can also sign and circulate our **Emergency Statement on Egypt.**

Freedom for Haitham Mohamedain

We condemn the arrest and detention of Haitham Mohamedain by the Egyptian army on 5 September in Suez.

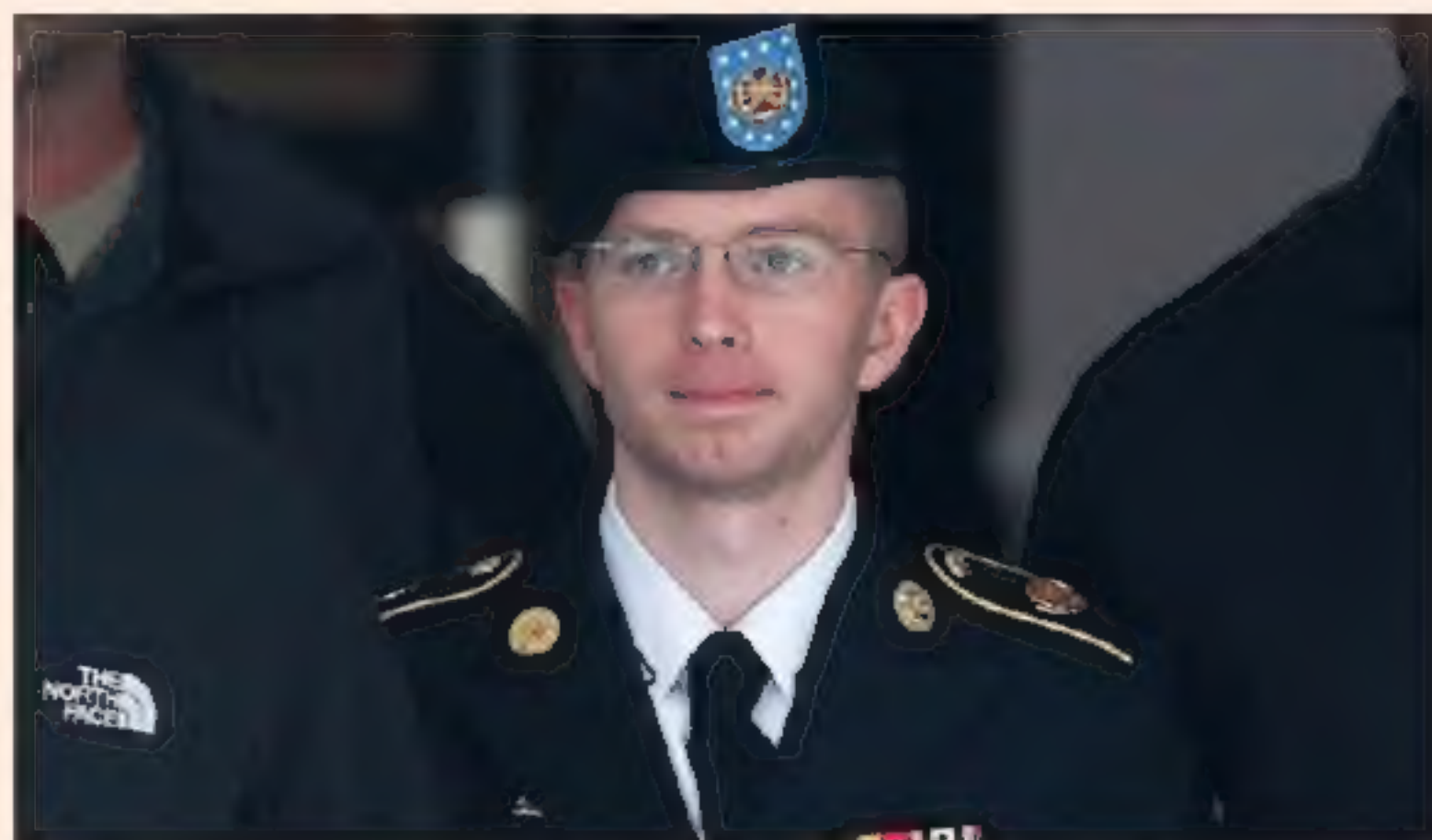
Haitham is a well known labour lawyer and revolutionary activist who has represented hundreds of workers arrested on picket lines or facing court hearings as a result of victimisation by their bosses or assaults by the police.

Just two weeks ago he was in Suez defending steel workers whose strike for higher wages was broken up by the Army.

As a leading member of the Revolutionary Socialists, Haitham has also been one of only a small number of revolutionary activists prepared to publicly condemn the brutal crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood by the Army in recent weeks, including the killing of hundreds of protesters on 14 August.

We call for Haitham's immediate release and the withdrawal of any charges against him.

The Truth about Chelsea



By Emma Amand

ON Wednesday, 21 August, 25 year old Chelsea Manning, former US Army intelligence specialist, was sentenced to 35 years in prison for violating the Espionage Act.

War Crimes

Chelsea Manning allegedly exposed allegations of physical and sexual abuse and torture of detainees perpetrated by the Iraqi Security Forces, and the military's orders to ignore these allegations.

She allegedly exposed the trafficking of children in Afghanistan, and instances in both Iraq and Afghanistan between 2004 and 2009, where large numbers of civilian casualties were not reported.

The "Collateral Murder" video shows an airstrike where civilians and journalists are indiscriminately slain, while those who come to the aid of the wounded are also targeted. Chelsea Manning spoke of this incident in her pre-trial statement.

"The most alarming aspect of the video to me, however, was the seemingly delightful bloodlust the aerial weapons team seemed to have. They dehumanized the individuals they were engaging with by referring to them as 'dead bastards' and congratulating themselves on their ability to kill in large numbers."

Espionage Act

Between 1917, when it was written, and 2009 when Obama took office, the Espionage Act, which was originally intended to stifle dissent over the First World War, was used three times against whistleblowers.

Obama has more than doubled that figure, using it seven times now within the space of four years.

This increase in use of the Espionage Act should be viewed as part of a broader process of preventing investigative journalism from uncovering abuse of power. Any attempt to uncover the inner workings of power is being inhibited, and those with a conscience who try to inform us of war crimes, are themselves being criminalised.

Treatment of Chelsea Manning

Before the court-martial began, Chelsea Manning was imprisoned for three years.

For over nine months of that period, she was subjected to inhumane conditions, including solitary confinement, sleep deprivation, and stripping naked in front of prison guards.

At the trial, Chelsea Manning was not allowed to plea for political prisoner status; instead her defence was forced to plea for leniency which meant that Chelsea had to apologise for her acts of conscience.

The sentencing that Chelsea Manning received is in excess of the time period within which many of the materials that were released will be due for automatic declassification anyway.

Following Chelsea Manning's publicly expressed desire to commence hormone therapy, the army responded by saying that they do not provide hormone therapy or sex re-assignment surgeries related to gender transitions.

Chelsea Manning has been sentenced to 35 years in an all-male prison.

This is in violation of her rights as a

trans woman. She is facing in to years of imprisonment in an environment hostile and dangerous to LGBT people. Transgender people in prisons face difficult struggles and are often forced to do time in solitary under the guise of being "for their own safety", or get housed in protective custody which means restricted socialisation, meal times, and recreational times.

Prisons

While civil prisons are often in gross violation of international human rights standards, it could be said that by their very nature, military prisons are even less accountable.

In the process of building movements in defense of prisoners' human rights, it should be possible to simultaneously question the use of prisons and indeed their legitimacy.

Solidarity

The SWP stands in solidarity with Chelsea. We demand her release and call on the Irish government to intervene.

It is also important that we show solidarity with Chelsea Manning with our letters and postcards of support and respect her gender identity in our communications.

Unfortunately, because she is incarcerated by the gender she was assigned at birth, mail sent to prisoners must bear their full legal name on the envelope to be delivered.

As such, we are listing Chelsea's legal name for mailing purposes only but it is requested that you address her as Chelsea within the text of your letters.

PVT Bradley E. Manning #89289

1300 N. Warren Road

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027-2304

Greek activist trial

PROSECUTION proceedings were enacted against Petros Constantinou, municipal councillor of Athens and coordinator of KEERFA (United Movement Against Racism and the Fascist Threat) at the end of July.

This is on the heels of a website announcement of KEERFA, which criticised the actions of the Hellenic Police (ELAS).

The police had executed Albanian runaways without trial.

Charges are based on Penal Code, article 191, for "provoking terror to the population and disturbance to the international relations of the country."

Fascists have been spraying slogans outside the local offices of ANTARSYA (the Anticapitalist Left) at Ambelokipoi and threatened



"Petros will die."

Hundreds of racist hate crimes are committed without any subsequent investigation from the authorities.

With the rise of Golden Dawn, racism is becoming institutionalised whilst left wing activists are unfairly targeted by the state.

Messages in support should be sent to antiracismfascism@yahoo.gr. And jsp@otenet.gr

NEWS IN BRIEF

Islamophobia in Burma

Since last March, anti Muslim attacks have been on the rise in Burma, also called Myanmar.

The worst incidents are in the Rakhine state, which is on the west coast.

Thousands of shops and mosques are being burnt, and Muslims assaulted; all whilst the police look on.

Video footage of these events clearly shows Buddhist monks participating in the violence.

This is being fuelled by the '969 Movement.' This is a sectarian Buddhist group led by Ashin Wirathu who preaches anti Muslim teachings.

He has been gaining support from other Buddhist leaders. The rank and file membership have no vote or opportunity to voice their opinions on '969'.

Most worrying is the political favour to which he is privy.

In June Wirathu appeared on the front cover of Time magazine labelled "The



face of Buddhist terror".

Upon which the country's president Thein Sein rushed to his defence and

banned the offending publication.

Wirathu is pushing for racist and sexist legislation, such as one law banning the marriage of Muslim men and Buddhist women.

All of Wirathu's teachings are couched in thinly veiled racist language, such as his 'love for his country' and his desire to promote 'traditional' values.

Anti-Nazis resist attacks in Czech Republic

Over 1,000 anti-racists mobilised across the Czech Republic as the far right organised anti-Roma marches in eight cities on Friday 23 August.

In Ostrava, the country's third largest city, hundreds of fascists fought to break from their approved route to attack a Roma area.

Over a quarter of a million Roma live in the Czech Republic and discrimination is endemic.

They suffer the worst poverty in the country and face the threat of massacre by Nazis.

Socialist Worker

Stormont politicians unite around austerity agenda



Above: Leaders of the two tribes united in austerity. Below: NIPSA banner offering a different alternative

RICHARD Haas is being hailed as a special US envoy who is coming to Northern Ireland to sort out the flags, parades and emblems disputes. He is being presented as a peacemaker who can bring the 'warring tribes' together.

But few have spotted the extraordinary irony of a US warmonger being dressed up in peacemaker's clothes.

Haas is a neo conservative who has been pressing strongly for an attack on Iran to bring about 'regime change'. He will be delighting at the proposed US attacks on Syria as it will advance his aim of weakening Iran's ally.

The contradictions of a warmonger turned peacemaker in Northern Ireland are just one aspect of the madness of official politics.

Posturing

All summer, the DUP have been running to position themselves as more true blue and loyal than the flag wavers who want to see the Union Jack flapping away all day, every day.

When DUP councillor Ruth Patterson was hauled before the court for suggesting that the possible killers of a Sinn Féin councillor would be doing the North 'a great service', she was flanked by her senior colleagues.

Robinson himself signed a letter to demand the right of loyalist bands to march past nationalist areas.

Yet even while this sectarian manoeuvring is being played out for electoral purposes, the DUP is happy to work with Sinn Féin to turn the North into a nice little neoliberal outpost that is 'open for business'.

Robinson and McGuinness will be playing the grovelling duo at an exclusive reception at the New York Yacht Club to honour Irish American sharks from the financial speculation 'industry'.

The club is so exclusive that it is open only to those who run gambling houses like Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan.

Robinson and McGuinness will tell the assembled capitalists that the North can offer them very low wages and all manner of grants to allow them exploit the population.

They may even hint that a divided workforce is a good thing for profiteers as it helps to weaken trade unionism and so reduce the pressure for higher wages.

Grovelling

So here we have two politicians – from 'different traditions' – in perfect harmony when it comes to grovelling to big business – and then playing a game of sectarian roulette when they get back home.

When it comes to neoliberal economic policies, there is perfect unity of purpose. But when it comes to shoring up their support-base, sectarian symbols are mobilised to show that they can be 'tough' at standing up for their 'own people'.

The Northern peace process was once sold as a model for other divided communities across the



NIPSA members take strike action

OVER 100 NIPSA members employed at the Legal Services Commission, went on strike on 6 September 2013 over a dispute about their pay.

The strike is a culmination of a build-up of frustration amongst staff at the Commission and a long-standing failure to resolve a number of pay matters.

Kieran Bannon, NIPSA Assistant General Secretary

issued:-

"NIPSA members in the Commission have taken this action because of the failure by the employer and its sponsor Department, the Department of Justice, to resolve a long running problem over pay rates.

"NIPSA is delighted that this action has been supported by virtually every member of staff and we hope that it sends a clear

message to both the Commission and the Department that these outstanding pay matters must be resolved as a matter of urgency.

"We are available for further negotiations but we will also be consulting our members employed at the Commission about any further strike action that may be required in order to secure a fair and just outcome to this dispute."

world. But in reality it was only a way of institutionalising sectarianism. Instead of open warfare, there was to be a never ending competition between the 'two traditions'.

Since the global economic crash of 2008 – which was triggered by the same people who meet at the New York Yacht club – attacks on the living conditions of working people have grown.

Business Support

Sinn Féin and the DUP may squabble continually over who shoulders responsibility for particular cuts but they are in fundamental agreement that cuts, privatisation and reduced taxes on big business are the way forward.

We need to cut across this politics with a strong socialist outlook that puts the common interests of workers ahead of sectarian divisions. Flags and emblems are no substitute for the bread and butter that we need to survive.

But standing up to sectarianism is not just a matter of talking about 'working class unity'. It means openly opposing sectarian games to run triumphalist marches through areas they are not wanted in or attempting to assert the superiority of one identity over another.

And, more crucially, asserting that workers who want to fight together will need a different type of politics than that presented by communal politicians who will sell every worker out to big business.

See Inside:

Page 5:



Is the global economy recovering?

Page 4:



In depth look at the conflict in Syria